



Deploying and using volunteer health practitioners in response to emergencies: Proposed uniform state legislation provides liability protections and workers' compensation coverage

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Abstract:

To respond effectively to natural disasters and other public health emergencies, government resources must be augmented with the resources of volunteer organizations. Governmental actors are prepared to utilize volunteer health practitioners (VHPs) to meet patient surge capacity and provide essential public health services. However, difficult legal challenges arise regarding licensure, the scope of practice of volunteers, the relationship of volunteers to local healthcare delivery systems, disciplinary enforcement, the extent of exposure to civil liability, and how to provide compensation for volunteers injured or killed during disaster response activities. The Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioner Act (UEVHPA) seeks to address these problems and provide a better legal environment that facilitates VHPs efforts. This article discusses two important provisions of the UEVHPA, Section 11 which provides immunity against claims for negligence, under certain circumstances, for volunteers and organizations engaged in the deployment and use of volunteers, and Section 12 which provides workers' compensation benefits to VHPs when other sources of coverage are not available. Disaster relief organizations and healthcare provider organizations have consistently identified uncertainty and a lack of uniformity with respect to these issues as a major source of concern to volunteer practitioners and as a potential deterrent to their effective recruitment and utilization. Uniform state enactment of the UEVHPA would resolve many inconsistencies and gaps in the regulation and protection of VHPs across states.

Source: Ask your librarian to help locate this item.

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Health Professional, Policymaker

Exposure :

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weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event

Extreme Weather Event: Hurricanes/Cyclones

Geographic Feature: ☐

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location: ☐

resource focuses on specific location

United States

Health Co-Benefit/Co-Harm (Adaption/Mitigation): ☐

specification of beneficial or harmful impacts to health resulting from efforts to reduce or cope with greenhouse gases

A focus of content

Health Impact: ☐

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

General Health Impact

Intervention: ☐

strategy to prepare for or reduce the impact of climate change on health

A focus of content

Medical Community Engagement: ☐

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation: ☐

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Other Vulnerable Population: Volunteer health practitioners

Resource Type: ☐

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale: ☐

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time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified